

ATTENTION TO THE DEMOCRATS OF ISLE OF WIGHT, NANSE- MOND AND SOUTHAMPTON COUNTIES.

Richmond, Va., Sept. 21, 1899.
Mr. William Shands, Courtland, Va.

MY DEAR SIR—I have received a communication from Col. R. E. Boykin, copy of which I herewith enclose, and I shall, as requested by him, present his communication to the state committee at a meeting to be held in this city at the Jefferson Hotel at 10:30 next Thursday morning, Sept. 28th. I shall be pleased to have you present and bring with you such friends as you may desire.

Yours very truly,
J. TAYLOR ELLYSON,
Chairman.

COL. BOYKIN'S LETTER.

September 20, 1899.

Hon. J. Taylor Elyson, Chairman of the State Central and Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

DEAR SIR—I claim and contend that I was the regular Democratic candidate for the Senate of Virginia from the Thirty-second Senatorial district at the regularly organized Senatorial Convention held in the town of Suffolk, on the 24th day of August last, by a majority of the legally elected delegates to the said convention. I am informed that Mr. William Shands, of the county of Southampton, claims that he is the regular Democratic nominee of the said convention for the Senate from the said district.

The conflicting claims and contentions thus made have engendered great dissension in the Democratic party in the said district, and if persisted in, may, and probably will, endanger Democratic supremacy, and may, and probably will, result in the election of a Republican to the Senate.

To avoid such a result and prevent further and increased dissension in the Democratic party, I hereby request that the State Central Committee be convened, and in pursuance of the power and authority vested in them, that they pass upon and decide who is the Democratic nominee of the said convention for the Senate from said district.

In the event the decision of the said committee should be adverse to my contention, I shall at once withdraw, and give my hearty and cordial support to the person declared by the said committee to be the Democratic nominee for the Senate from said district.

Very respectfully yours,
(Signed) R. E. BOYKIN.

MR. SHANDS' ANSWER.

Courtland, Va., Sept. 25, 1899.
Hon. J. Taylor Elyson, Chairman of the State Central and Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of Richmond, Va.

DEAR SIR—Your kind favor of the 21st, accompanied by a copy of the letter of Col. R. E. Boykin to you, is to hand and duly considered. After careful consideration of the proposition submitted by Col. Boykin, and consultation with many of my Democratic friends, I most respectfully decline to accept his said proposition. I presume that you can do no less than lay his communication before the State Committee, but neither I nor my friends will be present; and I presume, therefore, that you, as chairman, will rule that as I decline to

submit to the arbitration of the committee that the matter cannot be considered by it, and that the committee will sustain your ruling and take no action in the matter. Certainly any other action on the part of the committee would be an assumption of authority wholly unwarranted in precedent or party law and distinctly revolutionary in character. The committee has absolutely no right to take any action in such a case unless by consent of both sides to the contract, who agree to submit to its arbitration. To whole otherwise would be to put it in the power of any man who controlled a majority of the State Committee to dictate every nomination in the State, by simply getting up a contest wherever his man was beaten, and then have the State Committee act on it and decide in favor of his man. The Democratic party of the State is not yet ready to be bound thus hand and foot by its State Central Committee, and that portion of the party that is supporting me will not submit to any such usurpation of power on the part of the committee should it be attempted. Ordinarily, for the sake of the party harmony, I would agree to the proposition made by Col. Boykin, but I refuse to do so in this case, because I am so thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of my cause and because I believe that the State Central Committee is too partisan in this contest to make it a competent jury to sit in the case.

It is well known that I am a Tyler man and am instructed by the convention that nominated me, to vote for his election to the United States Senate, while on the other hand, Col. Boykin is an avowed Martin man and Martin's candidacy was endorsed by the faction that put him up. This makes this contest as it has been largely from start to finish, one between Martin and Tyler and as the State Central Committee is known to be largely in favor of Martin, they would not be an unprejudiced jury, and certainly I shall not submit my claims to any but an unprejudiced jury. The action of the committee on several occasions, and particularly on its meeting on June 12th last, convinced me and my friends beyond a reasonable doubt that the majority of the committee is completely under the denomination of Senator Martin, and hence I will submit no claim of mine in which he is interested, to their arbitration. I am a Democrat, and always have been one, and I challenge any one to show greater devotion to the party than I have shown, but I conceive it to be my highest duty as a Democrat to resist any action that shall deny to the Democratic voters the right and opportunity to freely express their choice. In the convention that nominated me, there were fifty-six (56) uncontested delegates. Of these thirty-five (35) supported me and took part in my nomination, while only twenty (20) aided in putting up Col. Boykin, and one refused to vote at all. In addition to these uncontested delegates there were two contesting delegation from Isle of Wight county, Col. Boykin's home, consisting of twenty-six (26) delegates each. The whole question of who is entitled to be called the regular nominee depends on which of the Isle

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of Wight delegation was entitled to represent that county in the convention. The facts surrounding the two delegations are as follows: Col. C. F. Day, County Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee of Isle of Wight county, Va., and father-in-law of Senator Thos. S. Martin, in accordance with the usual custom in that county, called a mass meeting of the Democratic voters of that county to be held at the court house on Aug. 7th, 1899 (County Court day), for the purpose of nominating a candidate for the House of Delegates and delegates to the Senatorial Convention to be held in Suffolk, Va., on Aug. 24th, 1899. At the appointed hour he called the said meeting to order, and he was elected as its presiding officer. Of course, at that moment his power as county chairman, ceased, and he became merely the presiding officer of the meeting and subject to the rules of parliamentary procedure, then after some preliminary proceedings, nominations for the House of Delegates were declared in order.

Dr. C. J. Bradshaw and Mr. T. N. Jones were placed in nomination, and tellers were duly appointed to make the count. The Jones and Bradshaw followers separated and retired to the places designated by the chairman for the count to be taken of them. As soon as the crowd separated it was self-evident that Dr. Bradshaw's followers were largely in the majority, and that Jones was overwhelmingly defeated, and as the result, the Jones leaders lost heart and would not participate in the count. That the tellers who had been duly appointed proceeded to canvass the Bradshaw vote, and that the vote was fairly and honestly taken, and that the representatives of both sides were privileged to participate in the count, and the Bradshaw tellers would gladly have welcomed the Jones tellers during the count. That the mass meeting reassembled to hear the report of tellers, and that Col. Day ascended the platform and as chairman of the County Democratic Executive Committee attempted to adjourn the meeting sine die for no good cause and without authority, motion or consent of the meeting, and vacated the chair, protest against such unwarranted action on his part was at once raised, and as he refused to further occupy the chair, the meeting elected another chairman to preside over it, and continued to transact the business for which it was called, reports of the tellers were called for. The Bradshaw tellers reported, but the Jones tellers failed to report, and Dr. Bradshaw was declared the nominee. Up to this point nothing had been done about Senatorial delegates, but after nominating Bradshaw the meeting proceeded to do the work that Col. Day had called it to do, and selected delegates for the Senatorial convention, and Shands' delegates were elected. I do not believe that any unprejudiced mind will decide that there was anything irregular in this whole proceeding, except the arbitrary action of Col. Day in attempting to adjourn the meeting without motion and consent of the body. Such an attempted action was wholly unwarranted and is not sustained by parliamentary law, and has no precedent in history. If, after such attempted action on his part, the Boykin people failed to take part in the meeting (it was self-evident that they were in the minority), it was their own fault and in no manner invalidated the action of the meeting. What Democrats that knows Day and Boykin, believes that they would have failed to have continued in that mass meeting had they

have had a majority of supporters in the said meeting? Col. Day and Boykin afterwards attempted to retrieve their lost fortunes by calling a primary to select delegates to the Senatorial convention. My friends refused to participate in that, as delegates had already been regularly chosen at the call of Col. Day. At that primary they claimed to have polled more votes than were cast for Bradshaw at the mass meeting, but admitting for the sake of argument, if you will, that that claim may be well-founded, still it did not invalidate the electing at the mass meeting, for if there had been only one hundred voters at that mass meeting then the action of only fifty-one of them would have been binding on the meeting and on the party, though there were two thousand voters in the county who failed to attend the mass meeting.

At the Senatorial convention held in Suffolk, Va., on Aug. 24, 1899, Col. Day, who by reason of his being senior chairman in the district, called the convention to order and refused to recognize the delegates regularly elected at the mass meeting, and announced his intention to allow the irregular delegates, selected in accordance with the so-called primary, to vote on temporary organization, and the proposed temporary chairman announced that he would recognize the said irregular delegation to vote in the convention on their own contest, and would exclude those regularly elected at the mass meeting. Such high-handed and arbitrary action the thirty-five uncontested delegates for me refused to submit to and would not permit Col. Day to thus organize the convention. In consequence thereof, the thirty-five delegates for me, with the regular delegation from Isle of Wight county, organized the convention and nominated me. While the other twenty delegates, with the irregular delegation from Isle of Wight, held another meeting in the same hall and put up Colonel Boykin. Such being the facts, no man ought to question my right to the nomination, and if there is dissension it is the result of the refusal on the part of Col. Boykin and his friends to accept the inevitable and acknowledge their defeat. Only four years ago discord prevailed in Isle of Wight, and Dr. Pierce made a fight against the renomination of Col. Boykin to the House. At that time, in order to save Col. Boykin and restore harmony in Isle of Wight, the Senatorial convention nominated Col. Boykin, Southampton particularly yielding up her preference for one of her own sons, who had been practically assured of the nomination, and going to his support. Now, at this time, and in face of the above facts and in view of Col. Boykin's professed unselfish devotion to the party and desire for harmony, it would be but right that he should withdraw in order to secure harmony. If he refuses to do so then the people of the Thirty-Second district must settle the question on Nov. 7th next. I do not fear the result. I am,

Yours very respectfully,
WILLIAM SHANDS.